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Council Approves Wastewater Treatment Project

The San Diego City Council voted Tuesday to approve a \$6.6 million contract with Camp Dresser McKee to test the use of treated wastewater to augment local reservoirs.

The Advanced Water Purification Facility that will be designed won't discharge water into the reservoirs but will be used to determine if treated water could be safely used to enhance local drinking water supplies. If the demonstration project is successful, a full-scale project could ultimately provide up to 16 million gallons per day of advanced treated water from the North City facility to augment the San Vicente Reservoir.

The city is studying whether additional reclamation facilities could be built throughout the region to reclaim even more wastewater. The aim of the project is to help reduce San Diego's reliance on imported drinking water and improving the environment by reducing sewage discharges into the ocean.

"Orange County has been safely reclaiming 70 MGD of wastewater to augment its water supplies through groundwater injection for several years," said Coastkeeper's Executive Director Bruce Reznik. "The AWP will bring San Diego one step closer to following their lead and realizing our goal of water independence."

Because San Diego would be the first city in California to use highly treated wastewater to augment reservoirs rather than groundwater, the city is required by the California Department of Public Health to undertake the demonstration project. San Diego imports over 80 percent of its water from sources that are steadily declining, including the Colorado River and San Joaquin Delta.